

GOOD TIDINGS

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EDITORIAL

We again welcome the glad spring-time. The awakening of nature's forces, which give promise of seed to the sower, is a manifestation of God's unbounded love and mercy, and should awaken in every soul a desire to glorify and reverence Him. With this object uppermost in the mind, we attain the highest state of happiness, but by following a course which our fallen nature dictates, we come far short of measuring up to that standard of life which God designed we should, and under this influence we are liable to forfeit the very thing for which we seek, namely—happiness.

When we consider our surroundings and present-day mode of living, we might well say that for many the cup of enjoyment is full. We have been passing through a period of great prosperity. We read much about the baneful effect this has had upon the present generation. No doubt the way is more open to sensual indulgence and more of an opportunity is given for falling into practices that are most gratifying to the carnal mind. Pleasures such as these may have the semblance of perfect enjoyment, but we always find in their wake disappointment, unrest, confusion, wasting and destruction.

Many who are in the pursuit of earthly pleasures have found that every effort made to gratify their own desires only leads one step farther from the source of true happiness. As man becomes more worldly-wise he has greater opportunity for gaining wealth, power and bodily comfort; but is it not true that the more the human element enters into the shaping of life's affairs, the greater is the tendency to confusion? Selfishness, envy, pride, covetousness and suspicion steal in unawares to disrupt and disorganize. By nature we are incapable of subduing these evils, but God, knowing our unfortunate situation, has in mercy provided a way whereby we may receive power to rule over sin and attain to true happiness.

It is the purpose of those who write for GOOD TIDINGS to point its readers to Christ who alone can bring peace and happiness to the world, to urge them to search the Scriptures, and to encourage everyone in the belief that salvation is within reach of all who heed the words of the Lord.—“The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.” Psalm 103: 17, 18.

SPRINGTIME

We welcome the little snowdrop, the harbinger of spring, as it peeps from beneath the half frozen earth. In the distance the mellow notes of the meadow lark joyously tell us it is the “spring of the year.” The little songsters are again returning and their sweet notes praise a Creator's handiwork, and move our hearts in praise and gratitude to Him for His wondrous works. The earth now barren will soon be clothed in its mantle of

green. Ere long the crocus bud will peep from the mellow earth, and the swelling bud on lilac and shrub will unfold into leaf and flower.

With joyful hearts we view awakening nature and in the beautiful words of Solomon, we too exclaim, “Lo, the winter is past. . . . The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.” The warmth of the sun's rays and the balmy air have effected an awakening, an emerging into life. The resurrection from a dormant state to a new life, is ever a miracle of nature. The seeds dropped into the earth and buried beneath the snows and ice of winter, are quickening into life and shall come forth in beauty.

Thus again we greet the joyous season of springtime. By the symbol of nature's resurrection an all wise Creator awakens us to the joy of the spiritual springtime, the resurrection of the soul from a dead state to a newness of life in Christ.

Death entered the world when our first parents transgressed God's word. By falling under bondage to sin they died a spiritual death. All their posterity remained under this bondage until the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, came to redeem fallen man. “Darkness shall cover the earth; and gross darkness the people.” Figuratively, it was the dispensation of winter.

The prophet Isaiah, “having seen them afar off,” foretold the joys of the spiritual springtime. “As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

Seven hundred years before the promised Messiah's coming, God renewed His promises and spoke by the same prophet, foretelling, “unto us a child is born,”

and His name shall be called, "the mighty God, the Prince of Peace." The mission of His coming, the redemption of man was foretold. "He was wounded for our transgressions. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." As the fruit of God's love, in due time, the Redeemer came to earth to ransom fallen man. The joyful message of His advent was heralded by a multitude of the heavenly host. Joyous message of good tidings! The Son of Righteousness "shall arise with healing in His wings." Spiritual springtime was drawing near.

He came as Mighty God, in the form and fashion of man, "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Fulfilling God's holy will, "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree of the cross." In the crowning act of His mission He vanquished death in everlasting triumph. It was an everlasting victory over him who held "the power of death." "I am He that was dead and am alive evermore." Joyous tidings, "He is risen"! It was fitting that again angels attested the tidings of joy which shall be to all people.

The Son of Righteousness is risen. "Lo, the winter is past." By the warmth of His love He strives to awaken, to bring forth to life the soul dead in sin. He longs to bring springtime where winter reigns. "I stand at the door and knock." The gentle summons comes to every heart and would awake every soul. "I am the resurrection and the life." If the call of grace is heeded, "though he were dead yet shall he live." Would any soul refuse the Savior's call? "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

An all wise Creator has created man a free agent. He has ever allowed man the freedom to accept or reject His word, and the gift of eternal life. How important that we heed the call for only

they who hear shall live. To every soul who shall "hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him." The soul now awakened will rejoice; "My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation." With praise and thanksgiving the soul shall rejoice evermore. "My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Hagerstown, Md.

E. S. L.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha, believing in the resurrection of the body, said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus replied: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." Two resurrections are plainly taught by the Scriptures: a bodily resurrection at the last day, and a spiritual resurrection in this life from sin and death.

Since all men are dead in trespasses and sins, the Apostle says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Before the resurrection of the dead can take place, the death of the body is necessary. Likewise in a spiritual sense there can be no resurrection from sin and death unless, in this body of sin, we endure sorrow of heart and sincere repentance so that the old man or the carnal life is mortified and buried. We must die unto sin if we would be made alive in Christ. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: know-

ing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." 2 Tim. 2: 11.

This resurrection includes the new birth, and the new creature as Paul testifies: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Again, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It is a resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life—"raised up from dead works to serve the living God." It involves the forsaking of sin and embracing Christ by faith, whereby we are cleansed from our sins, our hearts are purified by faith, our souls sanctified by the Holy Spirit and we are clothed upon by the merits of Christ. "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6: 11. Even the prophet Isaiah foretold the blessings in store for such souls: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

The truly regenerated in Christ are the new born to whom is given power to become the sons of God. They are no more under the condemnation of the law, as Jesus said to the Jews, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." These, chosen out of all nations, have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God and are the spiritual bride of Christ, His church, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. Of them it is said He "hath made us kings and priests unto

God." They are to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, and as Paul plainly teaches, "Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable service." Every upright soul that confesses Christ, and testifies by his life that he is begotten of the Father through the efficacy of the Atonement, witnesses to the truth of His word, helps to maintain His kingdom, and lives and reigns with Christ in the Spirit.

Besides this spiritual awakening through faith in the Atonement and obedience to Gospel teachings, there is nothing spoken of in the Scriptures to which the term "first resurrection" can properly be applied. It must take place here in this life, for it precedes the resurrection of the body. It is the preparation which all must experience who wish to be saved, as John in the Revelations declares: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

Springfield, Ohio.

M. R. M.

LIFE IS OUR OPPORTUNITY

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9: 4.

The Savior said this just before He performed the miracle of giving sight to the man blind from birth. He used the opportunity of doing good to the afflicted one, saying, "the works of God should be made manifest." The confession of the man who received his sight was: "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing." By His works the Savior convinced others that He was of God.

Since God has given us dominion over His works our stewardship should be to His praise, and our life will afford us happiness if we agree with His plan.

Labor, physically and mentally, is necessary for health. To provide for our many necessities and to make ourselves useful to others who are dependent are duties essential to our happiness in this life. Neglect of these divinely appointed duties causes painful regret in later life when opportunity for correction is past. This sad foretaste is an evidence of the eternal sorrow that will follow a misspent life!

Our present state is imperfect, or there would be no room for improvement. In all things we are to make progress. The Scriptures teach us to "increase more and more." Owing to our imperfect state we fail, we have reverses, some of which are irreparable. We are so constituted that we sorrow over our failings. We have the same soul now that we will have in eternity. Therefore we have proof that errors committed now if not repented of will bring regret in eternity. God in mercy has provided pardon for the penitent, that in eternity they may rejoice with thanksgiving instead of bewailing a lost opportunity. Will we accept the pardon, or be exposed to the sorrow of endless regret?

Under God's blessing our capability increases; as it increases responsibility is added in the same proportion. We are the intelligent agents by whom God purposes to work out holy ends. In material things, now, and in past ages a high degree of progress has been reached. History and discovery of buried civilizations give account that worldly progress may be lost or very often does not endure the ravages of time.

The testimony is that we are sinful by birth. Though sinful acts may be committed by children before they are conscious of sin yet they are free from guilt by Him who "taketh away the sin of the world." His sacrifice avails for the sin of innocent children from the time of

Adam to the end of the world. When children are old enough to be conscious of the unwritten law, and disobey it, then, by their disobedience they incur guilt and must by repentance receive pardon. No one calls for mercy without having a sense of guilt. The heathen without knowledge of the personal Christ, "Shew the work of the law written in their hearts." It convicts them of transgression and leads them instinctively to seek mercy. Conviction comes more from a spiritual influence than from a knowledge of the letter of the Scriptures. God moves in all things and He moves mysteriously in us. "In Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17: 28. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" Jer. 23: 24. Let us consider our hourly responsibility in the trust committed to us.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. H.

ORIGINAL SIN BANISHED PEACE

"And on earth peace, good will toward men."
Luke 2: 14.

Peace on earth was interrupted during the time intervening between the fall of man and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The entrance of sin into the world banished peace because it imposed a disability upon all men, in that it hardened the heart and enfeebled the moral powers of the soul, and disqualified mankind to love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind and their neighbor as themselves. Every act of man at variance with love to God and love to their fellowmen is sin; of which the devil is the author. From the above-named moral deterioration come contention, litigation and war.

Christ was foretold, as the Prince of peace, and it is said, "of His peace there shall be no end." His own testimony is, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." His counsel to His disciples was, "have peace one with another." Nations enter into agreements with each other and conclude peace, but such peace compacts are often not durable; equally so between individuals,—while their interests are mutual and their relations remain unstrained, such peace compacts last, but not beyond that state; but the peace of our text is everlasting, since it is founded on Divine love.

War existed during the patriarchal period and also during the time of the law and the prophets. It is, however, a fact that if sin had not entered the world there would be no war. War was one of the effects of sin, and we are assured that Christ came to save His people from the power and dominion of sin. We are authorized by Christ to ascribe all deviations from love to our hardness of heart, which hardness sin caused, which explains why God permitted litigation, divorce and war during the periods above named.

We now live in the Gospel era, and ours is the kingdom of Christ, and as Christians we are prompted by the great law of love to obey His Commandments, to love our enemies, pray for them, return good for evil, sheathe the sword, and in all things to do to others as we would have them do to us. Christ's doctrine and example emphasize the text: "On the earth peace." His sermon on the mount is a powerful appeal for purity of heart and for love in our lives, and consequent peace among ourselves, to which end we must be born again, or, in other words, have the spirit of Christ, which begets in us a sentiment adapted to Gospel teaching.

We are reminded that we must reckon with conditions as they are and not only as we would wish them to be. The conditions are that the majority of mankind do not obey the Gospel, and not only that, but many do not obey the civil law, unless they are compelled to do so. These circumstances create two separate kingdoms. The one the kingdom of Christ, the other the kingdom of this world—hence the necessity of civil government.

God authorized the magistracy and civil government for the preservation of order by protecting the law-abiding and restraining the law-breakers. Civil government is based upon justice and is designed to be a blessing to mankind; as "righteousness exalteth a nation," we conclude, as the people are, so will the government be. To the magistracy is given the sword to enable them to attain the designed end. As long as mankind remains in the condition they are now, the probability is there will continue to be war and rumors of war, notwithstanding its awful character. There is no substantial evidence that advanced learning and higher civilization prevent war, with its barbarism and horror. It is claimed that Christianity as a system of religion, with its higher code of ethics, mitigates the horrors of war; even this claim fails.

How can war be ended? We should all agree, by becoming Christians we will end war. We repeat, Christ's kingdom is founded on the great law of love, which is written in every Christian heart by the Spirit of the living God, which is the Divine life in the soul. If this law is received in sincerity, and conscientiously obeyed, war will cease from the earth. But according to prophecy and the direct testimony of Christ, there is peace on earth now. Where is it? It is with the church of Christ, separated from the worldly life and from the prin-

ciple of "eye for eye," and adopted into the kingdom of Christ founded upon love to all men.

Chambersburg, Pa.

J. S. L.

WORSHIP

"Ye worship ye know not what." John 4: 22.

The blessed Savior told the Samaritan woman whom He met at Jacob's well, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews." This woman had some knowledge of the Scriptures, as her remark to the Savior would indicate when she said, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things;" but her knowledge of the Scriptures did not qualify her to render acceptable worship, hence the Savior's remark, "Ye worship ye know not what."

All who desire knowledge of God's word can attain it, but knowledge of God's word, without works prompted by faith, will not suffice. The apostle James says, "Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

The power to serve God in an acceptable manner had become impaired in mankind as a consequence of Adam's transgression, but it is evident that all men retained some knowledge of God and a disposition to worship Him. In this enfeebled condition Cain and Abel each brought an offering before the Lord which showed a disposition to worship, and by the example of Cain the truth of our text is portrayed. Cain's offering was the fruit of the field, and having been offered in a spirit of self-justification, it was rejected by the Lord. Abel's offering was acceptable because it

was offered by faith; it was attended by the shedding of blood, or the sacrifice of life.

"Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." His sacrifice, though offered in the dark age of the world, may typify the service that God requires of His people in this era of light; and his offering may be a type of Christ and His atoning blood. Cain's offering is typical of any worship which is not according to the will of God, without true knowledge and living faith.

There is no evidence that God specially required these sacrifices which Cain and Abel offered, but it shows a disposition on the part of mankind to worship whether it is attended with knowledge or not. In the creation of man he was given power to obey, but since the fall it seems that the inclination to disobey is stronger than the inclination to obey, which is the cause of so much evil, not only at the present time, but has been so in all ages.

The prophet said: "Lo, this only have I found that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." Man was made upright in form and also in character but Adam's transgression has left its impress on every rational being.

Man has not wandered so far away from God that he cannot be reclaimed, nor has he fallen to such a depth that he cannot be raised up. He has been created with such sensibilities that he feels the drawings of God, and he responds by a form of worship as in the circumstance of Cain and Abel.

As time rolled on God made covenants with the faithful ones, and the service required of them increased in proportion to the knowledge revealed to them.

That so many perished, is evidence

that their worship was like the Samaritans, in this, that it was not according to knowledge. We cannot conceive that any one would offer a sacrifice if he knew that it would be rejected; hence the importance of knowing just what the will of the Lord is, and of a willingness to be obedient. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."

King Saul lost the kingdom by allowing himself to be influenced by the people. They wanted sacrifices, but God demanded obedience. This proves that man can sacrifice and may be willing to make great sacrifices with the hope of meeting God's approval, but only obedience to what God commands is acceptable to Him;—"Behold to obey is better than sacrifice." Man's whole duty can be summed up as follows: to hear and to believe—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me hath eternal life."

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that God never made any compromise with man in regard to worship, hence it is all important to know how we worship. To hear Christ is to obey what He commands, whether our flesh suffers or not. To love and to do good to them that love us is a common practice, but to love and to do good to our enemies are the words that we are to hear, but they apply only to Christ's followers.

Adherence to gospel teaching in all its varied precepts assures promise of heavenly reward, because it is the fruit of worship which is prompted by knowledge. To all worshippers who disregard Christ's simple doctrines it can be said, "Ye worship ye know not what."

Lemoyne, Pa.

J. I. M.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. Prov. I: 5.

A THOUGHT

The world progresses and moves on,
We see advancement in the arts,
Industry, science. Deep research
Is made, e'en to the hidden parts;
And master minds are toiling on
For something new, a constant search.

The old time methods all laid by
With rapid transit e'en like wings
We fly. We rush through space.
Inventions great, each evening brings
Some theory new, the old must die;
And ancient ways no longer find a place.

The world progresses and today
We comforts have our fathers never knew.
Less rugged paths we need to tread
Regard for man and charity more true.
With grateful hearts we all can say
We should by mercies great to God be led.

Amid this progress, thoughts like these
Steal o'er me in my quiet hour—
I see less reverence for the God above
Less fervent trust in His Almighty power.
Oh, sad, if earth's short joys and love of ease
Should draw our hearts from God's eternal love.

Waynesboro, Pa.

A. S. F.

WHY SO MANY DIVISIONS IN RELIGION?

This is a question with many persons and it is a very reasonable one. There is but one Gospel and all the different sects claim the Gospel to be their guide. Most persons view these divisions as being inconsistent. Yet there are some who claim that it cannot be otherwise, because many men have many minds, and it is but reasonable that they should differ in their views in reading the Scriptures. Others see an advantage in these differences as affording an opportunity for all to choose according to their preference and that all minds can be satisfied. This solves the matter to suit the minds of different people; but is it consistent with God's plan of restoring peace and fellowship?

The claim is made by some persons that the many different churches are branches in the true vine, Christ Jesus, but they fail to observe that the fruit is not of the same nature. Naturally the branches of the same vine produce the same kind of fruit. The Savior said, "By the fruit you shall know the tree." Again He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." If the Christ-fruit is not borne they are not branches and are none of His. The mind of man may find comfort in this view, but if it is not in full agreement with Christ's counsel, we can hope for no favor of God in the day of reckoning.

We have laws to maintain order among the people; if disobeyed, persons merit punishment accordingly. All lawyers understand the ruling by reading these laws and do not differ in advice. The Gospel can well be compared to the law as a guide to know how to live to escape the penalty of future torment. It is more important to know the true meaning of the Gospel than the law, since the Gospel is designed to save us from sin and eternal woe. Adam's disobedience resulted in losing the true love to God, and fear followed. Man now should appreciate the open way in Christ by which the breach was healed, so that all may find peace and fellowship with each other and with God, without which no one can see the Lord and abide with Him evermore.

Many church members claim that if one sins that sin will go with him, and do not feel it a duty to admonish him. By communing with him they acknowledge that they are in fellowship, which in reality is not truth. If they are not in fellowship their duty is to labor as Christ teaches, and first restore fellowship.

The Gospel is simple in its terms; *love* is to *rule*, and separation from the

world must take place. But, it is declared the carnal mind cannot comprehend the things of the spirit that underlies the Gospel. Christ said, "My words are spirit, and they are life." His teachings do not adapt themselves to human reason by which divisions are caused. Man without the spirit ventures to define, but fails to comprehend, and he obeys only such portions of the word as seems reasonable to him. As the opinions of men differed, the result was that from time to time, men of influence presented their different views and found followers, forming many sects until finally hundreds of divided bodies were organized. Some were impressed with the necessity of a close walk to the letter; others were more liberal, trusting in the mercy of God. What will the end be? Will God recognize anything short of obedience to all his teachings? "He that transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." Disobedience is sin, and sin is death.

To Nicodemus it was said, "Ye must be born again." Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2: 5. This means a willingness to do the Father's will even unto death. By nature man is not willing to renounce self and obey Christ's word without reserve. It is declared we are all sinners, that we must repent, have sorrow for sin and ask for mercy of God; who will give to us His mind and spirit which is the new birth. The mind and the desires are now changed and the spirit will lead us to obey out of love, because He first loved us; and help will be granted in every time of need. In this faith, comfort and assurance is found.

If all men that profess Christianity were converted, divisions would cease. It would be as it was when the disciples were converted at Jerusalem and three

thousand souls with them, when all were of one heart and mind with love to God and love to man. There can be no divided views among the truly converted. Since the Gospel is unchangeable and the Spirit present now, as then, one must conclude the cause for these divisions is the want of true conversion. The new birth results in love even to our enemies, in doing good to those that hate us, and in a willingness to suffer wrong and injustice as Christ did; this is a true witness of being in a saved state. Love is a power. Solomon said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath," and Paul said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him * * * for by so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." God is love and love is the fulfilling of the law.

God cannot recognize divisions; He cannot recognize more than one church as His bride. Which of the many will be accepted? If one is found that is striving to obey the Gospel, which is the evidence of love, that church will be accepted. "If the word speaks you free, then are ye free indeed."

Lancaster, Pa.

J. K.

GOD'S HANDYWORK

David, the psalmist of old, as he kept watch over his flocks became well acquainted with the starry heavens, also with the rugged country over which the sheep grazed. Seeing these things in his lonely occupation and meditating upon them, undoubtedly influenced him in writing the words of the nineteenth Psalm,—“The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handywork.”

The visible creation with its evidences of design, the succession of day and night, the regularity of the seasons, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest bear testimony to the living God

who is “clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.”

In the season just past we have seen the snow piled high in drifts, the dead vegetation, the leafless trees and barren fields which showed the effect of the chill wintry blast upon the earth; now, under the warming influence of longer days, gentle rains, and balmy breezes, we note a wonderful transformation upon the earth. The drifts of snow are gone, vegetation becomes a beautiful green of various shades, the trees are resplendent in their fresh, multi-colored foliage with their many-hued buds and blossoms; the fields now have herds and flocks in them, the lakes are filled with water of deepest blue, the slowly floating clouds are over head;—who can say the handywork of God is not visible to everyone?

Having been privileged to visit the churches in various parts of this land in which we dwell, we have seen much of God's handywork and beheld many evidences of His creative power which revealed not only His eternal power, but also His goodness to all mankind.

Passing westward, leaving the plains country with its farms, its fields of growing grain, pastures with stock, orchards and meadows, we notice the increasing elevation, the sandy, gravelly nature of the soil, the lessening of rivers and lakes, the sparseness of vegetation giving indication of the nearness of the foothills; and looking in the far distance, amidst the clouds we get glimpses of the mountains, dark colored, with an occasional peak snow-capped, visible only as the clouds break and allow the sun to shine upon them.

The vast treeless expanse with a few small homes, large corrals, fences visible for long distances indicate grazing territory. Soon scrubby evergreens, rocks strewn hither and thither, give evidence that we are nearing the Rocky Moun-

tains, the backbone of the continent, as it is called. Now the rocks are wonderful with the many colors and various shapes and sizes, standing out in bold relief, and we marvel at the infinite power required to pile them into these immense ranges of mountains at so great a height.

Well did the prophet write, "God hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion."

In the lower levels we see the mountain streams turned into the irrigating ditches and what was desert, now fruitful fields yielding bountifully of fruits, vegetables, grasses and grains. In these instances the contrast between the unproductive and productive region is very marked, the difference being in the life-giving water supplied by the snows upon the mountains.

The transforming of the earth by water which the eye can behold is marvelous, but the transforming of the lifeless soul by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit is even more marvelous to our limited comprehension, but nevertheless it cannot be denied, as Jesus said unto the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4: 13, 14.

How different from the pure mountain streams is the water in the Great Salt Lake,—no life can exist in it, no vegetation fringes its shores, wood standing in its waters is preserved because of the salt. Though the water is beautiful, to drink of it, we are told, is death to water fowl which swim upon it.

From the lake we pass into a desert,

lifeless and barren; no vegetation, no bird, no animal, bleak, hot and dusty,—even the rocks in places are black, as if burned by the fierce rays of the sun shining for centuries upon them, bringing to mind a soul darkened by the deceiver.

Again we approach hills and mountains covered with large trees which supply man with material to build and construct. Mines of coal are here; various metals and minerals are obtained; oil is found; all provided for man's comfort and enjoyment in the great storehouse of the earth,—God's creation.

Nearing the Pacific coast we see the giant trees. An inscription at the base of one states that it is the oldest living thing upon earth, being 6000 years old, 246 feet in height, 40 feet in diameter. With a feeling of awe we gaze at the towering top of the majestic tree, thinking of the many centuries it has been rearing its evergreen head among the clouds which float about the mountain; its grey, soft bark reminding one of the hoary head of an aged man. On every hand there are springs of purest water trailing off in rivulets, the sides of which are moss covered, with ferns and flowers and bright colored flowering trees and shrubs growing thereon. Some of the trees have large cones on the tips of their branches; others, like the giant redwood, have smaller ones, but within each are the seeds which contain the God-given power of reproduction.

Passing along the highway we see vineyard of grapes, orchards of orange, lemon, fig and grapefruit. These fruits are distributed throughout the land as food to the millions.

In travelling over the highways of countries which abound with the precious fruits of the earth and with flowers and trees we are brought to think of the true highway established by the King of Kings for His children, "The way of

holiness; no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there,"—those who bear the fruits of the Spirit and are adorned with the Christian graces of faith, hope and love.

We behold with our natural eyes the earth and the heavens which show the handywork of God, causing us to reverence Him as the Creator; but with spiritual eyes only can we behold God, for "God is a Spirit."

While things seen may bring spiritual exercises which will lead to faith, nothing transitory can be the object of faith; and nothing transitory can satisfy the needs of the soul nor restore to it communion with God. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

God fully revealed Himself to man in the person of the Savior. He loved our souls and sent his beloved Son into the world to manifest this love unto us. Jesus came upon earth, to do the will of Him that sent Him, to take upon Himself the sin of the whole world, to die, the *just* for the unjust and rise again to be the Justifier of those who truly accept Him as their Redeemer. He is now seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, an High Priest of intercession who, by His Spirit will lead and guide into all truth those who will receive His ministrations, ever directing them upon the way which is strait and narrow, leading unto eternal life.

Glen Elder, Kansas.

E. F. S.

THE BEGINNING

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Gen. 1: 1.

Time began with the creation but was only reckoned when "God called the light day and the darkness He called

night and the evening and the morning were the first day." Gen. 1: 5. Before the beginning of time we know that God existed, as the Scriptures tell us, that God is "from everlasting to everlasting." Psalms 90: 2.

Before the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters all things were in confusion. The "earth was without form and void." Out of this chaos God wrought perfection and harmony. The first day light was created, the second day the firmament, the third day the seas, the grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, the fourth day the lights of heaven, the fifth day the fish and fowl, and the sixth day the beasts and man who was given dominion over all creatures. All we behold of heaven and earth and all that is concealed in the earth and the hidden things of heaven were made by God, the Father Almighty, in whom we believe.

Viewing the creation, we are impressed that the works of God are perfect and remain as they were in the beginning. His promise is fulfilled: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Gen. 8: 22. The earth continues to produce food for man and beast. The lights of the firmament move in their fixed orbits; the seas continue to surge to and fro, but their boundaries are fixed. Thus all natural and celestial bodies act in accordance with the laws governing them from the beginning; and we are moved to say with the Psalmist: "Lord how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches." Psalm 104: 24.

Spiritually, the world, as pertaining to man, is in almost the same chaotic condition through sin as the natural

earth was before the "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Man, one of God's creatures, has not continued in the primitive state in which he was created. In the unregenerate life of mankind we see disorder, unrest and every evil work, being without God and enveloped in spiritual darkness. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." Isaiah 60: 2. God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." So the divine Light, which came into the world through His beloved Son Jesus, will shine into every heart where light is desired, and darkness will disappear. To those whose hearts are inclined to heaven, this lower world seems to be full of darkness and confusion—perfection being seen alone in God. Christians should always be reminded to keep heaven in their eyes and the earth under their feet. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Col. 3: 1.

Our natural lives have their beginning when we are born into the world and end when death claims the body. Our accountability to God begins as soon as we know good from evil. Our journey on the broad road that leads to destruction begins when we wilfully consent to sin and harden our hearts against the visitations of grace; it ends when we are willing to renounce sin and enter the strait gate and the narrow way that leads to endless joy and happiness.

By refusing to continue in sin we become regenerated, born again and instead of confusion, order, peace and love will be manifest. As God's natural creation continues unchanged, being perfect, so will the faith that was "once delivered to the Saints" remain unchanged, and this faith operating in the heart of the redeemed will bring about

a kingdom of peace. As a consequence all who accept this faith will love one another and be in fellowship.

Lancaster, Pa.

J. L. K.

LOVE AND MERCY

Love and mercy are two of the divine attributes; they comprehend all that is pure and holy. Love is the ruling scepter of the Kingdom of Heaven. Its influence on the heart is mild and gentle; it rules by entreaty and persuasion—not by coercion; yet its power is "strong as death." The hard heart is softened; the proud, revengeful spirit of man is subdued by it. The adversary is confounded and robbed of his power by the effects of its gentle sway upon the heart of man. When divine love possesses the soul it overcomes all opposition, and unites us to God with an indissoluble bond. The Apostle referred to the supreme power of love when he said: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8: 38, 39.

God is the omnipotent Creator of all things. "He laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of His hands." The Psalmist says, "His tender mercies are over all His works." The crowning act of His visible creation was man whom He "made in His image and likeness." But, lamentable to contemplate, this highly endowed creature, through transgression, fell so low and was such a grievous disappointment to God that He said, "It repenteth Me that I have made man." This was a sad reflection upon God's wonderful crea-

tion, which when He had finished He declared: "It was very good." Gen. 1: 31. In love and mercy God offered man future redemption and salvation. In the fulness of time His plan was accomplished. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. This demonstrates God's transcendent love, which is beyond our finite comprehension.

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;" and if we love God we will love our brother also. 1 John 4: 16-21. This blessed relation is only attained by obedience and by faith in Jesus. Love, therefore, is not only the basis of salvation, but it is the controlling power in maintaining unity and fellowship among the subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven; for by its exercise disobedient subjects are either reclaimed or separated, that they may be led to reflection and, perchance, to repentance, as the Apostle says: "For the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Thus unity and purity are preserved.

Love and mercy are closely allied; like twin sisters, they go hand in hand in their blessed service to man. They are inseparable, for mercy is as impossible without love, as love is without mercy. Natural love is a great blessing to this world, but divine love pertains not only to this world, but to the eternal world to come. Love is the greatest gift we can receive; faith and hope shall cease, but "love is of God" and shall endure forever. Oh, then should we not cherish this love and praise its Author God! He ordained Jesus to come into this sin-stricken world to suffer and to die that the love which was lost might be restored to all penitent hearts. He em-

powers such souls to love God and one another, and also to love their enemies. "Thus love is the fulfilling of the law."

Jesus' resurrection, which consummated the great plan of salvation, is celebrated with much ostentation and extravagant splendor by the professing world. Divine love is opposed to carnal, worldly love of display and emulation, and those who possess it rejoice not only in commemorating the resurrection of their dear Savior, but they "rejoice always," in a meek and quiet spirit, "singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord," void of all worldly display.

Lancaster, Pa.

E. H. W.

BRIEF NOTES

At this season of nature's awakening even tiny blades of grass confront us with mysteries which we cannot fathom, and forcibly impress us with the great Creator's handiwork, and with a sense of our indebtedness to Him,—to acknowledge His goodness, and to glorify Him as He is glorified in the visible creation, on the earth below and in the heavens above.

* * * *

While there is so much doubt expressed in regard to religion a noted writer aptly says: "The truth revealed by religion is, that the universe is not the product of blind chance, unreasonable power, or lawless energy, but the well-ordered work of intelligence, wisdom, will and love. The truths discovered by science are illustrations and proofs of this sublime conception."

* * * *

Death always and under all circumstances is solemn and impressive, but not always necessarily sad. Whatever mea-

sure of happiness and satisfaction in living we may have had, when death ends our companionship with those who were near and dear to us, there is conveyed to us a direct message in the handwriting of Him who gave us this earthly life to live; this message may not be so clearly read and understood by those not so directly affected, yet he who runs may read that "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

* * * *

It is looked upon as a great Christian work in which popular churches are uniting in using a powerful combination of their influences to secure the enactment and enforcement of laws, rules and regulations to prevent and restrain mankind from indulging in vices and crimes, and to prevent wars as a result of international quarrels.

It is a great Christian work in name only, not in reality, when the work does not correct the cause, but deals wholly with effects. The cause can be reached only deep down in the heart of every individual; and in the dark, benighted condition, and the inconsistent practice and profession in the popular churches this is not reached and cannot be reached. Many who become measurably enlightened see and confess the failure, and are often applauded for their utterances as long as they do not withdraw from these unfaithful works,—really works of darkness, with only such temporal rewards as they carry, and the hope of a future reward only a delusion.

* * * *

Great efforts are made in psychological studies to find the connections between the present life and that which lies beyond the tomb. In one week there were newspaper accounts of two persons who

committed suicide purposely to explore the mystery. It is a pitiful delusion under which men look forward to a happy abode in eternity, as an existence that begins when this life ends. It must necessarily have its beginning in this life, and can only then find its happy culmination and continuance in eternity.

The apostle Paul speaks of being called, with his fellow-believers "with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." In Christian living, then, it becomes a fact that "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

* * * *

A friend remarked: "Today is my ninetyeth birthday." My reply: "You have had ample time to live a useful life. The question you should be able to answer in the affirmative is, Have I lived to accomplish the purpose which the Creator intended I should, in the ninety years allotted me?" He said: "I don't know that there is much of a purpose when it is all said and done, except what purpose we ourselves make, and the results are hardly worth while." My reply: "You surely know that in all the visible creation everything is created for a purpose. Can you believe for a moment that man could be an exception since he is the masterpiece of it all? There is certainly a very high and worth-while purpose. The trouble with man is, that he rejects the Creator's purpose and substitutes one of his own with

the result that it is not worth while, as it becomes apparent at the close of life that the object to which man has devoted himself is a selfish one. Life then has been a failure,—ninety years, or whatever its length, spent in vain! An investment made by the Almighty that has brought no returns, and yourself alone to blame. What will this mean to you?"

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What do we understand by the saying of Jesus: "If thine eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee, also if thy hand or thy foot offend thee cut them off?"

A. Jesus here speaks to His disciples of their spiritual conflict and gives a natural illustration with a spiritual signification. The eye has a wide field of vision; it can, without apparent effort, survey all things surrounding us, and give the mind impressions.

Things we see may awaken in us lustful and carnal desires. Should we give room to these desires we would offend the Spirit within us and our "eye would be evil." The Savior said pluck out the eye when it offends, meaning that we should turn away from the evil and resist the temptation. It is the same with the hand or the foot. If we should be inclined to reach for or take hold of anything forbidden, or if our feet would lead us to places where the lusts of the flesh and of the mind might be gratified, or to a religious worship in which the doctrine of Christ is ignored, we must cut off and cast from us the suggestions of evil which cause offenses—figuratively, the hand or the foot.

Q. What lesson do we learn from the conversion of the thief on the cross?

A. On the one hand it is an evidence of abounding grace to sinners and of free salvation; on the other, it is an

illustration of true repentance and living faith. This man acknowledged openly his transgression and the justice of his punishment; he rebuked his railing companion, saying, "Dost not thou fear God?" He obeyed when called and confessed the Savior before all men, under the most adverse conditions; when Christ was being crucified, when He was "despised and rejected of men" and apparently denied the mercy and favor of God, he appealed to Him without any encouragement from others and in the presence of His enemies: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Manifestly this circumstance is a valid ground for comfort to every contrite sinner—even the most wicked. But it stands against those who, misapprehending the mercy of God, expect to be saved without regeneration, as well as that vast number who have been called often and yet delay repentance. May it not be said of this penitent malefactor as the Lord said of the Ninevites and of the queen of the south, he "shall rise in judgment with this generation and condemn it."

Q. Why are God's people "peculiar?"
I. Peter 2: 9.

A. Because their way of living is in conflict with the worldly life, one distinct from the other, with different aims and ends. They separate from the spirit of the world, consequently their customs and practices are at variance with the established customs and standards adopted by the world.

Being born again, they come into possession of a new life—a principle that is heaven-born, which constrains them to love one another—to love their enemies—to reprove all unrighteousness in the church and out of the church—to separate from unfaithful worship—to make no compromise with sin. Adhering to the true Christian principles, their cir-

cumspect and consistent life will preach condemnation to the ungodly, which distinguishes them as a peculiar people.

Q. What do we understand by I. Cor. 2: 16?—"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

A. We know the divine mind only so far as it is revealed to us. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those which are revealed belong to us and our children." Yet the Apostle recognized such knowledge as indispensable to the forming of a correct judgment of the conduct of others who profess to be Christians. Paul had but one solution, "But we have the mind of Christ;" he was assured that he and his brethren did possess the mind of Christ, and so it will be with all who truly learn to know Him, and willingly obey Him. Everyone desirous of knowing His mind must go to Him in order to receive it, and He invites all anxious seekers to come. His teachings are not difficult to understand. From the Sermon on the Mount we learn much of the mind of Christ. The Beatitudes reveal the mind of Christ, the first of which is the key to them all, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Everything essential to salvation will be revealed to God's children through the mind of Christ. If we fail to accept that His sayings are essential to salvation, we assume the position of one who would instruct the Lord.

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE

David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Thy works." Psalms 139: 14. Fearfully, because any interference with human life, contrary to the will of God, cometh under condemnation. Life in its simplest form is a mystery. The higher

forms of life are wonderful in their complexity. The marvel of growth and development, the intricate structure and adaptation of parts, the perfection and beauty of form convince us that there is one Source of life, one Great Designer and Creator.

What is true of the natural life is also true of the spiritual life. Sin brought death into the world. Man by dishonoring his Creator through disobedience was driven from the source of life, and a flaming sword turning either way stood against him. In consequence of transgression he lost the divine life which he had in his creation and became spiritually dead. Man's case would have been hopeless but for the fulfillment of the promise of a Redeemer who had power to restore life to the soul.

According to Scripture evidence this life cannot be restored by any efforts of man or any visible means, as a moral life, good works, water baptism or church ordinances. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17: 20, 21. This kingdom the Savior compares to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Matt. 13: 31, 32. Naturally the husbandman first prepares the field by removing thorns and stones and cultivating the soil so that it becomes mellow, moist and warm. The soil is now ready to receive the seed, where, in obscurity it germinates, takes root and grows until finally the plant becomes visible. The grain of mustard seed typifies God's grace that has appeared unto all men. The field is the heart of

man which naturally is unprepared to receive the good seed.

When man becomes awakened and feels the condemnation of God's righteous law and his inability to fulfil it, the heart is filled with fear. It is written "The fear of the Lord is the fountain of life." Prov. 14: 27. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him: and He will shew them His covenant." Psalms 25: 14. But it may be a temporary fear causing repentance or turning away from a former walk in life, and still be devoid of the divine life. The filial or child-like fear of God is a holy affection or gracious habit born in the soul by God, through Christ, whereby it is inclined and enabled to obey all God's commandments, even the most difficult and to hate and avoid evil. Abraham had a filial fear of God which prompted obedience; he did not withhold his only son as an offering to God. Through a filial fear the heart is broken, prepared, regenerated and renewed by grace and the power of the spirit of Christ and made partaker of the divine nature. The powerful operations of God's Spirit in renewing the heart is compared to the wind. John 3: 8. Man hears the sound of the wind, but he has no power to restrain it, neither does he perceive whence it comes or whither it goes; it is known by the effects it produces. So the spiritual change is wrought in the heart of man with such power that a sensible and evident change is made in the life and conduct of those who experience it, though the manner thereof be incomprehensible. Paul says "We speak the wisdom of Christ in a mystery even the hidden wisdom." 1 Cor. 2: 7.

The mysterious restoration of life can only be accomplished by an unconditional surrender to Christ and by accepting Him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The

words of the Savior are "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture. * * * I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10: 9, 10.

The statement that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of the mustard tree, conveys to our minds the thought that as the birds move in the realms above and rest in the trees, so the divine life from heaven is imparted to the soul, bringing it into conformity with the will of God and into fellowship with Him and with one another in Christ, and His blessing and Spirit descend to guide, strengthen and protect through all the labors, sorrows, trials and temptations of this mortal life.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Rev. 2: 17.

Baden, Ont.

H. G.

OUR IDEAL

All human beings are alike in this, that there is within them a strong tendency to do wrong and also a drawing or tendency to good. This causes a struggle or turmoil within which is felt even in childhood, becomes decidedly marked when maturity is reached, and continues to the end of life. The good influence is God, drawing us to Him and His ways. The evil is hereditary sin dating back to the transgression of our first parents, Adam and Eve, and transmitted by them to all of their posterity.

God, in His infinite mercy, along with the punishment that it was necessary for Him to inflict upon Adam and Eve, at

once provided for them and their descendants, a way of escape from the terrible consequences of their disobedience to Him. This way was, is, and ever shall be Jesus Christ. We read, Acts 10: 43, "To Him giveth all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins."

When, in God's good time, Jesus, the promised one, appeared on earth, He himself said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." O the comfort of these words! He despises none, but offers pardon, and a helping hand to all who are truly penitent.

The forgiven soul awaking for the first time to real life, full of love and thanksgiving to God, and willing to obey Him, looks to Him for help in the new, untried way of living. We read in His holy word, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." This implies acquaintance and friendly relations. What blessed words—"If *any man* hear my voice." Here is hope for all.

Jesus Christ—Son of God—sinner's friend, is our deliverer and becomes our ideal. We, of ourselves, are helpless to do good. Christ, though divine, was tempted in all points as we are; He lived a perfect life. We can safely look to Him and trust in Him. We can love, worship and adore Him. He wants our whole heart and is ever with those who have given themselves entirely to Him. Remember He said, "I will come in to him."

What a privilege to have our ideal within us and ever ready and able to help us in all our difficulties! Christ, our ideal, knows us fully—much better than we know ourselves. In spite of this

knowledge He still loves us and wants to help us. What a restful thought! He is "an ever present help in time of need." In our inmost soul we can reach Him at all times and under all circumstances by prayer. He needs no words of ours. The longing of our hearts to be led by Him, and to do His will is understood by Him. Yet at the beginning of each day we need to formally give ourselves to Him and ask his guidance and help; and at the close of day to thank Him for all His blessings and ask forgiveness for all our shortcomings.

The duties of this life often press heavily upon us. We, like Martha of old, may be "careful and troubled about many things." We may allow circumstances and people to annoy us. Uncharitable thoughts present themselves and may not be dismissed as quickly as they should be. Sometimes we worry, which may be an offense to our Heavenly Father. Discontent, jealousy, want of faith—in fact, all the wrong thoughts common to man attack us until we feel to say with St. Paul,—“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The answer that came to Saint Paul was, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” That is also our answer. Let us then thoroughly devote ourselves to Him who is our hope, our helper, our ideal.

Let us beware of making ideals of human beings. We naturally cling to what we can see, hear and feel and are in danger of idol worship. Those whom we respect, admire, and love, may be worthy examples to follow after, but the only safe and perfect ideal is Christ.

We can acquaint ourselves more fully with Him by reading His Word. St. John says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. * * * And the

Word became flesh and dwelt among us." So the New Testament (figuratively speaking) is Christ himself revealed in language.

We need to become very familiar with the Word. It is meat and drink to the soul. Let us study it, that we may keep in mind our ideal. Let us pray Him for light that we may the better understand Him and our need of Him. Let us pray Him for grace and strength that we may not weary of trying to be like Him.

We are worldly by nature, and have much need of the constant inspiration of our Divine Ideal. He helps us do our daily duties heartily "as to the Lord, and not unto men." He draws our minds heavenward and loosens our attachment to the perishable things of this life. He imparts to us a love for the higher, better life, and leads us to long for and strive after it. Our longing is not sincere if we do not with all our powers strive to attain to what we long for.

If we pray, "O Lord deliver us from temptation," and then voluntarily place ourselves in its way, our prayer is not sincere and we cannot expect it to be answered.

Let us not trust in ourselves. We may be weaker than we know; we need to flee from the enemy and pray God to deliver us from his power. Our perfection is in Christ, and one of the greatest attainments is to learn to know our own imperfection.

Lancaster, Pa.

L. L. F.

AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE

These comforting words were spoken by Moses to Asher, the head of one of the tribes of Israel. Moses also told him that his shoes should be iron and brass. To all of the tribes he said, "The eternal

God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." These are encouraging and precious promises. We might say the shoes of iron and brass were to protect Asher's feet, when walking over rough places. To have the eternal God as a refuge and to be held up by the everlasting arms should give one courage under all conditions. Then to believe that "as our days, so shall our strength be," one should have nothing to fear.

The children of Israel had many blessings. They were God's chosen people. He cared for them tenderly but yet they lacked faith and were often rebellious. After the many demonstrations of God's love and care for them, one would think that they never would have doubted Him. He helped them through the Red Sea, guarded them by day and by night so tenderly, gave them food and water, yet in the end how few were counted worthy of entering the promised land! In reading of God's dealings with the children of Israel, it would seem to us that it would have been so easy for them to trust the Lord; and that they should always have been happy and obedient. All that was necessary was to believe that He cared for them day and night.

The followers of Christ today have the same promise of help. As the need for the day, so shall He supply strength. They are Christ's chosen people, just as the children of Israel were the chosen of the Lord. The eternal God is their refuge and underneath them are His everlasting arms. Christ says, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The Apostle also says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

When we meet what seems to us to be a severe trial, we may for a time forget these promises or fail to exercise the faith our Heavenly Father would have

us to do. We see how carefully the children of today are trained in the schools to fit them for their life work, so Christ allows His spiritual children to meet trials and disappointments to fit them for their future home in heaven.

If Asher had refused to put on the shoes of iron and brass they would not have protected his feet; and if we do not exercise faith and believe that the trials which come to us are for our good, we do not profit by them. If we fully believe that, as our days, so shall our strength be, we, like the children of Israel would need have little care; but too often we, as they, would like to gather manna for more than one day. We by nature are selfish and perhaps all are acquainted with self-pity. The friends of the soldiers in the World War were advised not to write letters of sympathy to them; so the soldiers of Christ need every means of encouragement in their warfare against self. Not only in times of grief and trial do we need strength for the day, but there is danger in times of prosperity that we forget God. It seems to be the nature of man to wander away from God when he prospers and all goes well. We need to ask for help to remain humble, and to be submissive to the trials and disappointments of life, well knowing that they are often sent as blessings to keep us from worldliness and selfishness.

Natural children are differently constituted and consequently need different methods of training. We believe it to be so with Christ's spiritual children. We are all different by nature. We may think our fellow-believers have fewer trials than we, but we believe our Heavenly Father knows our frame and allows what is best for us, as He says that all things shall work together for our good. Paul said, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh lest he should be

exalted above measure. He believed that he needed the thorn to keep him humble.

How thankful we should be that the Lord reminds us, even though we suffer severely. The Psalmist says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Again he says, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

If we could at all times fully believe that as our days, so shall our strength be, we would have no need to fear any evil in this life; but as "we have this treasure in an earthen vessel" we are admonished to search the Scriptures, to pray always, and to try to remember that the Lord is always near and that He never changes. As we enjoy natural food most when hungry, so we believe that the more needy we feel, the more fully we can realize the power of our Savior's love.

Chambersburg, Pa.

E. K. L.

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds); Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10: 3-5.

The Apostle's reference to a conflict must not be mistaken; it is clear that he does not mean the strife which comes as a fruit of the carnal mind, which brings discord and contention in the world, for he says, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal"; and the spiritual life is based on a sacred principle and foundation. The Savior disregarded entirely what pertained to social advancement and temporal prosperity; He came for a higher and more noble purpose—to es-

establish a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, and to qualify them to receive and retain it; the heart must be purged and cleansed from sin.

To maintain this condition requires a daily conflict, and arouses in us a sympathetic interest and concern for the welfare of others, that they too may come to the knowledge of the truth, and having attained that knowledge that they may walk therein. To render such assistance requires great carefulness, for mankind are strongly inclined to self-love and to have confidence in their judgment and abilities. However, if the desire to obey Christ's teachings and to do His will is the sole object of those who have had experience, and those who are willing to learn, it becomes an easy matter. Any assistance will be gladly welcomed, for they have come to realize that "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," is the enemy of the soul, and also the enemy of God and of Christ whom they love. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Rom. 6: 12.

To bring anything into captivity requires violence, as is evident in nearly every undertaking in life; and when we are conscious that the eternal happiness of our souls depends on the outcome of the conflict, we will gladly enter into it with all our powers.

"The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8: 7. The body desires ease and comfort, and the thoughts yearn for the things which promise to supply them. A well-balanced mind is one of the greatest blessings of man; and if the thoughts are directed in the proper channels a great amount of good may be accomplished; but if the natural mind is permitted to dominate our lives, it may bring much

evil into the world, and sorrow and reproach upon ourselves. In our spiritual calling, it is not sufficient that we keep our thoughts from leading us into evil, but we must so control and direct them that they may be of service in the Lord's great work.

We would especially encourage the young to obey their convictions and to cherish good thoughts, for as the years roll by, and age comes on, the mind inclines more and more to recall the things of the past, even the experiences of early life. If the exercises of the mind were spiritual and profitable in the past, this may be a source of much comfort in age; but if the battles must all be fought when both mind and body are declining it will be an occasion for bitter regret. Besides, we have no promise of attaining to advanced years, and if the present life is not a worthy one, all opportunity is at an end if we should be suddenly cut off.

Landisville, Pa.

C. S. N.

THE OPEN DOOR

At the time of the persecution of the Church at Jerusalem, the believers "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." We also learn that "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

Later, after Saul was converted, he wrote to the Corinthians and told them he would "tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost . . . for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." He evidently anticipated the difficulties to be met but did not waver in his faith in the risen Christ.

The Apostle Peter admonishes us, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us.

A true indication of whether we really possess spirituality of mind, is manifest in our capability to endure disappointment on account of the vicissitudes of this life. When we cannot rise above the adverse conditions which surround us, we lose many opportunities to grow in grace. Too often we are inclined to be downcast on account of ill-health or other misfortunes which come to us. We overlook the fact that it is through the open door of endurance that patience may have her perfect work, as James writes, "Behold, we count them happy which endure." If the peace of God is not ours, then have we sincerely sought Him? When we allow God to work in us according to His good pleasure, then can be accomplished in us the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

When a change occurs, we grieve the Spirit if we desire the order of the past to prevail, but rather should we strive to adapt ourselves to the new order. Our ability to meet the future in faith and therefore without fear, is dependent on our will to mould our lives in accordance with the purpose of God as it is daily revealed to us. The Apostle John warns us, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." Only in this submission can we honor God and lose not the spiritual power we have already attained through our former experiences. We are inclined to forget the Psalmist's injunction, "Be still, and know that I am God."

In this connection the Book of Job is a revelation of the depths of despair into which one can descend. He praised the Lord even though his earthly possessions were taken from him, but when bodily health and strength departed, it was indeed a sore trial. Then it was he de-

clared, "Let the day perish wherein I was born. . . . Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?"

Do we have faith enough to enter courageously the open door of opportunity which invites us to a larger life beyond? Very often the door that opens to us is one through which we can pass to cheer and aid others who are temporarily overcome by the trials of this life. We must lose our selfishness and relinquish some plans for worldly gain in order to serve others. In doing this none other than our Savior will continually sustain us, while subduing our will. He is well qualified, for the Apostle Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." And while we are serving others, we scarcely realize the miracle happening to us. At times we may have rebelled when the path of duty did not lie in that of our ambitions. But now we are willing to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," if we have the furtherance of His kingdom at heart.

Another test of spirituality is our readiness to meet the great change that awaits us—the passing from time into eternity. We do cling to this life. On the other hand, there is nothing commendable in desiring death merely to evade the responsibilities of life. In this way we do not cultivate hope and strength to enter the open door of each new day of service to others. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

Since "we are saved by hope," we have this confidence that if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Jesus gave this assurance when He declared: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath

everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Waynesboro, Pa.

B. F. M.

LIGHT

Jesus said I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. John 8: 12.

Light is a wonderful element and so essential that without it we would be able to accomplish but little work in this world.

In the beginning of the creation God said, "Let there be light and there was light." He placed the sun in the firmament to give light and warmth to the earth which causes it to be productive and bring forth fruit.

Man having been created in the likeness and image of his Creator enjoyed complete communion and fellowship with Him because he then stood in the light, but when he yielded to the suggestion of the spirit of darkness and transgressed the commandment of God he fell from his first estate. He became estranged and fell under a cloud; his spiritual vision was marred; he became unhappy and experienced much misery. Sin, which is darkness and the direct opposite of light separated man from that happy relation with his God, and in this doleful condition he would have had to remain, had not God in mercy provided a way whereby he might again enjoy a hope of restoration through the promise of the woman's seed which should bruise the serpent's head. This promise brought comfort to all who believed that God would remember the covenant He made with our first parents and which He renewed from time to time; but the heart of man being corrupted and darkened by sin, as time went on, darkness

covered the earth and gross darkness the nations and the royal scepter departed from Juda so that none sought after the law of God, but all flesh sought its own way; then God fulfilled His promise and sent His only begotten Son into the world. Of Him the Evangelist says, "He was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1: 9. "The Word (Jesus) was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," and the testimony is that as many as receive Him, to them He will give power to become the sons of God; these accept Him as the light and being born again they walk in the light. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"; this proves to us that there must be a change of heart. Christ says He is the way, the truth and the life and no one can come to the Father but by Him. We should strive to get in the way, and be careful that we are not deceived for many false prophets have gone out into the world. We have a sure word of prophecy and whatever is not in agreement with gospel teaching is not of God.

One of the first sayings of Christ after He entered His mission was: "Repent and believe the gospel." If we believe and follow the gospel it will teach us to deny self and it will instil in our hearts the principle of love; then we will love our enemies and return good for evil.

Jesus came into the world to reveal the last will and testament of His heavenly Father, and said He must work the works of Him that sent Him while it is day; for the night cometh when no man

can work. In temporal affairs we choose the day-time to engage in labor for without light we can accomplish very little; if we walk in the night or in the dark we stumble. Likewise if we disregard gospel teaching we wander into spiritual darkness, therefore the apostle makes the appeal: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light."

According to the Scriptures we are accountable for our works done in the body; we must all appear before the great Judge who, as a shepherd, will divide and separate His sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on the right hand and say unto them, "Inherit the kingdom of joy prepared for you"; to those on the left He will say, "depart into everlasting punishment." God is love and has no delight in the death of the sinner but wills that all should come to the knowledge of the truth and to repentance.

How careful we should be that we walk in the light! The testimony is, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." What a happy condition!

Humberstone, Ont.

J. A.

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS

The spirit of gratitude or thanksgiving is one of the chief graces of true Christian living and is not confined to stated times or special conditions. The apostle Paul even went so far as to instruct the Thessalonian brethren to give thanks in everything. It was not thoughtless advice he was giving, but rather the outcome of his own patient waiting on God

through the many adverse experiences he had in the years he followed the Master. He saw the wise guidance of an unseen Spirit and was grateful for the results in his own life.

He had known persecution, and only a short time before had shared it with these very people. Banished from Philippi because of his preaching he came to Thessalonica. The short account given of his stay there tells of hardships. He spoke in their synagogue three Sabbath days it is said, trying to convince those present of the Christ and the resurrection. Quite a few believed and "consorted" with him, but the unbelieving Jews and the "baser sort" of the city raised a riot. They said these are men that try to turn the world upside down; they are against Caesar and want to set up Jesus as a king. The authorities of the city were so moved that Jason, Paul's host, had to give security before they were dismissed. So he left the place by night like a fugitive from justice.

But the Apostle's heart was in his work and his solicitude was so great that he sent Timothy back to further establish and comfort his converts in the faith so that none should be moved by these things, "for it is there-unto we are appointed." He had warned them that they should suffer persecution but he feared lest the tempter might discourage them. The report he received of their steadfastness moved him to write a letter in the most touching and affectionate manner. They shared the persecutions, and also the recompenses that alone come from faithful obedience to the Spirit of God. It was a mingling of suffering and happiness and he saw many reasons for thanksgiving both for himself and for them.

In all ages the faithful were characterized by devotion and gratitude. David

was an example from youth to old age. It was well illustrated by his desire to build a temple for Divine worship. He so moved the people by his ardor that they gave liberally and willingly for the purpose. The hymn of thanksgiving that followed his success is beautiful. In humility he considered his own state and the state of his people, that they were all strangers before God and their days on earth but a shadow. He recognized that all they had came from God and "of Thine own have we given Thee." They gave the best they had in sacrifice such as was required of them in that dispensation because they felt it was given to them that they might return it to God.

We live in a different age. We are blest as they were with a belief in God and with the knowledge that it is our duty to worship Him, but there is more required of us because of what we have received by the Holy Spirit being given to us. Thankfulness is a fruit of the spirit of reverence and love which every child of God possesses. Our natural blessings are many, and if we are right at heart we are thankful every day for them, but greater still is our gratitude that we have been delivered from the bondage of the law, from hardness of heart and from "the handwriting of ordinances which was against us." Christ is our deliverance from all these and through Him we are made partakers of unmeasured spiritual benefits and are given strength and courage to meet the varied experiences of life.

Trials are a part of living. They are referred to as a "refiner's fire"; but there are benefits in them for us if used aright and we often see them later as blessings in disguise. Sorrows come to all, sooner or later, and it is only our Christ-given faith that enables us to see a bright lining to the dark cloud of grief.

Afflictions and suffering are the portion of many and our hearts go out in sympathy to those who have so much of the hardships, pains and heartaches of life to bear. In all these things we are reminded of the words, "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." So here too we have reason for gratitude and love to our Heavenly Father.

We pass through seasons of happiness as well as seasons of heaviness of heart. We are so made that our spirits rise and fall, and many are the times we cannot explain our emotions even to ourselves. Perhaps in the times when all seemingly goes well with us, we are in the greatest danger of drifting away from God and forgetting our high calling. We are by nature so selfish that we cannot realize this innate tendency to be the cause of much of our trouble in life. We would like easy paths and the best of everything for ourselves, but an enlightened soul knows these temptations to be promptings of the enemy. How unlike Christ, our Great Exemplar! He who was rich for the sake of fallen man became poor that we may be rich. Again, we are taught "not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think." Considering human frailty this surely should not be hard to do. Humility and a willingness to follow in the steps of self denial directed by our Savior are essential if we would live aright.

To cherish the Divine Spirit at all times and by the help of this Spirit to follow its guidance and obey the teachings of "the wisdom that is from above" is the daily work of all who would be true Christians. At all times our safety depends on keeping close to the Lord and remembering to give thanks in all things.

It is only by the renewing influence of grace that we can learn to lay aside every weight and the besetting sin and run with patience the race set before us, ever looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. It is in this faith and hope that we can have comfort and courage to meet life and death and "in everything give thanks," trusting the promise, "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

Chambersburg, Pa. M. C. S.

THE SAVIOR

Christ the Lord our loving Savior,
In His mercy, boundless, deep,
Came to find the helpless sinner—
Wake him from his deathly sleep.

Yea, atone for his transgression—
Offer him redeeming grace
In his lost and sad condition,
Unto a complete release.

O the fount of living waters!
Bread of life, for hungry souls;
He that stills the raging tempest,
And our every life controls.

Come to him, and amply garner
Gracious wealth and food divine;
So you need not thirst nor hunger,
Nor for living comforts pine.

Looking forward with enjoyment,
When this transient life shall cease,
To enjoy with saints and angels,
An eternal reign of peace.

Lancaster, Pa.

S. H. C.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22: 14.

This is God's irrevocable word, which will stand forever. All who, with faith-

ful Abraham, believe with their whole heart will bow to God's word; although it be contrary to their own reason, they will be obedient in all things. Well may we say, here is shown unto us what is good and what the Lord requires of us: to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.

Divine help is so mysterious that we can truly say in the language of the Apostle Paul, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 1 Tim. 3: 16. What a heritage God offers to the millions of people on this earth!

To all men He has offered heaven-born peace and rest,—an invaluable gift amidst the strife and turmoil of this life. "He is the Rock; His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment. A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Deut. 32: 4. All who fear God and truly believe His word will not confer with flesh and blood, nor with their darkened understanding. With Paul, they will follow the heavenly light, Christ Jesus in His word even if, on this account, they should lose house, lands, wife, children, brothers and sisters, and their own life by fire or sword. They would rather bear all this with joy than to wilfully transgress one of the least of God's commandments.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Heb. 11: 24, 25. Little children in innocence are in a saved state, but when we come to years of understanding as Moses did, and know the right hand from the left, we stand before the open door to choose salvation. We

then are accountable beings. And the invitation to all is to come, look unto Me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. Isa. 45: 22.

Solomon, who in his day was the wisest among the children of men, found, in the study of wisdom, that all human courses are vain and then said,—“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Eccl. 12: 13, 14. Our finite minds cannot fathom the depth of redeeming love; but when our hearts are open to the precious calls of God’s mercy He can work within us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city.”

Canton, Ohio

A. F.

SPEAK GENTLY

Gentleness is one of the choice virtues and is therefore one of the fruits of the spirit. Gal. 5: 22. If we could always speak gently and utter no unkind words, we would not only let our light shine, but could do much good to our fellowmen. Love would rule our hearts and love’s voice is always kind. Gentle words are often a soothing balm to a troubled and anxious mind.

We can gain the love of little children by a gentle, kind word, and we should remember that the dear little ones may not remain with us long, and perhaps they are only lent jewels. The Savior made them a pattern and example unto us, when He said: “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become

as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

We should speak gently and kindly to the aged. Their faculties being weakened, they are less able to bear the burdens of life; they often feel discouraged and have anxious cares; they also realize that their day of usefulness has passed, that they are of little value to the world and may feel they are not appreciated. A gentle word and a kind act may be a comfort to them when the sands of life are nearly run and they are ready to depart in peace.

We should speak gently to the young who are gradually assuming the grave responsibilities of life. A gentle, kind word of appreciation or praise may go far to encourage and inspire them to earnest effort to cope with the realities of life. Our lives are full of anxious care—how much we need the gentle word!

What a comfort it was to the fallen woman, when Jesus spoke the gentle words: “Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.” So we should speak gently to the erring ones, that perchance we may win them back again.

We should speak gently to the poor, for they have enough to endure and contend with, and a gentle word may help them bear the burden and cheer their drooping spirits.

Jesus came to redeem the fallen, and by gentle and kind words and acts He admonished all men to subdue their stubborn will and invited them to come unto Him. He said: “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” He spoke gentle words of comfort to those who loved Him. Even in His dying hour upon the cross, He showed a gentle, forgiving

spirit. Though His words were gentle they had great power, as when there "arose a great storm of wind at sea, and the waves beat into the ship; He being asleep they awoke Him and He arose and said unto the sea, Peace, be still." And there was a great calm.

We in sailing over life's sea may meet storms and waves of temptation; doubts and anxious fears may threaten to sink our bark, but if we in faith call upon Jesus, He will calm our troubled spirits, and restore comfort and peace to our souls.

Hagerstown, Md.

C. C. S.

KING DAVID'S REIGN, AND ABSALOM'S REBELLION

King David accompanied his army in many wars and they were always victorious over their enemies. But Joab was a successful leader and David, no doubt feeling weary of his many cares, remained in his house in Jerusalem while Joab went to battle against the Ammonites.

As David was walking upon the roof of his palace, he saw a woman bathing. She was very beautiful and he wished to have her for one of his wives. He sent for her and inquired who she was. He was told her name was Bathsheba and she was the wife of Uriah, who was a soldier in Joab's army.

It was not considered wrong at that time for a man to have more than one wife, but David could not marry her while Uriah lived. A wicked thought came into David's mind and he sent word to Joab to place Uriah in an exposed position in the battle. This wicked thing Joab did and Uriah and other brave men were cruelly slain.

David then sent for Bathsheba and she became his wife. Possibly no one except Joab and King David himself knew how and why Uriah had been

killed. But the Lord was greatly displeased and sent the prophet Nathan to reprove David. Nathan said unto him, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little lamb which he had bought and nourished and which grew up with his children. . . . And there came a traveller unto the rich man, who spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the stranger's entertainment."

King David did not realize the import of Nathan's words. He became indignant and said, "The man shall surely die and shall restore fourfold for the wrong he had done."

Nathan then said, "Thou art the man." He also told him the Lord had made him king in place of Saul. But since he had caused Uriah to be slain, the sword of Uriah should never depart from the house of David. David was conscience-stricken and confessed his guilt, saying, "I have sinned against the Lord."

He showed so much sorrow and penitence that the Lord forgave him.

A son was born to David and Bathsheba and he was very dear to them. But he was taken sick and Nathan told David that the child would not live. David prayed and refused to partake of food, lying on his face, upon the floor of his house. When the child died his servants feared to tell him, thinking his grief would be yet greater.

But David arose, washed his face and put on his kingly robes. He went first to the house of the Lord and worshipped. He then partook of food, saying, "The child could no more return to him, but he could go to the child."

David sinned grievously but in sorrow and repentance he sought the Lord and was forgiven. After he felt that he was forgiven David wrote the Fifty-first Psalm in memory of his sin and of God's forgiveness. David knew that his Psalm would be sung by all Israel, and that his wickedness would ever be remembered. His sin was great but his penitence was sincere.

The Bible does not conceal any wicked acts of men but tells the evil as well as the good. The prophesied evil which Nathan told David would befall his house was not long withheld.

David and Bathsheba had another son named Solomon. This son was foretold to be a man of peace and should be King in his father's stead.

King David had many children, and his eldest son was Amnon. Amnon very cruelly treated his half sister Tamar, who was a full sister of David's son Absalom.

David was deeply grieved but did not seem to punish Amnon, while Absalom cherished a feeling of vengeance against him. Absalom invited all his brethren to a feast in his own house, while his sheep were being sheared. They came suspecting no harm. Absalom gave secret orders to his servants that while his brothers were at the table feasting they should fall upon Amnon and put him to death, which dreadful act was done.

His brethren fled in haste and a rumor reached King David that all his sons were killed. He rejoiced over their return, but sorrowed for Amnon.

Absalom fled to his grandfather, the King of Geshur, where he remained for three years. At the end of that time David longed to see his son and Joab instructed a woman to pretend, and plead for a son of hers who was banished. David was touched and told Joab to

bring Absalom home and while Joab obeyed, David refused to see his son for two whole years, while Absalom dwelt in his own house. Through Joab's interference and pleadings, David finally forgave Absalom and became reconciled.

Absalom was a young man, admired by all Israel for his beauty and celebrated for his luxuriant growth of hair, of which he was very vain. Soon after the reconciliation with his father he began to live as though he expected to be King. He had chariots and horsemen and never appeared alone in public. He was crafty and ambitious and pretended to have the people's interest at heart. He met them with a show of affection, telling them if he were only made judge he would do them justice. He thus stole the hearts of the people, and won many to believe in him.

He asked his father's consent to return to Hebron, as though he wished to worship, or fulfill a vow. Then he sent spies or messengers throughout the land, to all the tribes, telling them when they hear the sound of the trumpet they should proclaim Absalom king.

Absalom also secured the aid of Ahithophel, who had been King David's wise and chief counsellor. The conspiracy grew stronger and the people seemed to turn to Absalom.

When King David was told of Absalom's doings he at once proposed to flee. He had always been bold and fearless, but he now seemed to accept Absalom's rebellion as a punishment coming from the hands of the Lord.

David went forth weeping, barefoot and humbled, and his household and faithful followers went with him. Ittai followed him with six hundred men. It is thought that Ittai was a son of Achish, the King of Gath, who on account of his devotion to David was banished by his father. David told Ittai to return

but he refused to do so vowing allegiance to David.

The people followed David weeping as they went, and the Priests knowing the kingdom was David's, followed carrying the Ark of God. They crossed the brook Kidron with it, but King David told them to return to Jerusalem with the Ark, as it was too precious to be exposed to danger. He said no harm would be done to the Priests as the nation had not forsaken their God although they had deserted their king. David was greatly humbled, and said, "If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord He will bring me again and show me both it and His habitation, but if he say thus, 'I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let Him do as seemeth good unto Him.'

Zadok and Abiathar were the priests, and David wished them to return and have their sons Ahimaz and Jonathan bring him word of what occurred while he was hidden in the wilderness.

David went up Mt. Olivet weeping, with his head covered, and barefoot. When he was told that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, he prayed the Lord to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. In his distress he went to the top of Mt. Olivet and worshipped the Lord.

Hushai, who was a friend of David's and also a wise counsellor, came to David with his coat rent, and earth upon his head. He was greatly affected by David's calamity and desired to follow him. But David told him to return to Jerusalem and pretend to be a friend to Absalom, and in this way he might be able to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. Hushai was not a warrior and David felt he might only prove to be a burden in their flight, but being wise and discreet he might be able to aid him by returning to Jerusalem. David

also wished him to send word by Ahimaz and Jonathan, of all that transpired.

Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, Saul's son, met David in his flight and brought him a present of food. When David asked about Mephibosheth, Ziba wickedly and untruthfully replied that Mephibosheth had said, "Now shall the house of Israel restore to me the kingdom of my father." David rashly told Ziba that all that pertained to Mephibosheth should belong to Ziba.

As David passed along a man named Shimei of the family of Saul came out and cursed David, casting stones at David and his men. Abishai asked leave to put him to death, but David forbade him to harm him, saying, "If my son seeketh my life, how much more may this Benjamite do it: let him curse." David seemed to feel the Lord allowed Shimei to curse him as a chastisement, and to humiliate him.

Hagerstown, Md.

E. V. L.

A CHILD'S STORY

My dear little Children:

I know you will be anxious to hear what happened when Paul and his companions reached the Island Melita, now called Malta.

We think of them as a party of desolate, cold, wet men, stranded on an island where an ignorant, cruel barbarous people lived, called Barbarians.

But to the surprise of all, and to the credit of these people, we are told they showed great kindness, kindled a fire, and received every one of the sailors, because of the rain and the cold.

When Paul had gathered sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. The snakes called vipers are among the most dangerous and poisonous of reptiles.

When the people of the island saw the snake hanging on his hand, they said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."

But Paul shook off the snake and felt no harm. They expected he would become swollen, or fall down dead suddenly, but seeing that no harm came to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

The chief man of the island named Publius received them and lodged them three days very kindly. At this time the father of Publius was very sick with a fever. Paul went to him and prayed, and laid his hands on him and healed him. When this was known, others also which had diseases came and were healed.

They stayed on the island three months until the winter was over, when they found a ship to carry them farther. The people on the island held them in honor and were very kind to them and when they departed all their necessary wants were liberally supplied.

After sailing some days they came to a place where Paul found some Christians and they tarried with them seven days. Later some other Christians heard of Paul and his party and came to meet them, whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage.

The Centurion's regard for Paul evidently increased during the voyage, and

upon reaching Rome he delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard, but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him; thus he was saved from the horrors of prison life.

Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching with all confidence what Jesus had commanded, no man forbidding him.

Like Paul, we too sometimes find great kindness where we least expect it; and often among the poor and lowly in life we find the noblest, kindest hearts. We are told "To condescend to men of low estate."

I once visited a poor, sick old colored lady. She was very ill, but she told me a sad story of her life when she was a slave. She told of her sufferings, which were made harder to bear because of her cruel husband, but she said, "I forgive everything, because Jesus teaches us we should, and I do believe in God."

I asked her how she knew all these things, when she could not read, "O, I feel them in my heart."

This poor old colored woman with her beautiful faith, which gave her such a comfort and helped her to bear so patiently her sufferings, was a surprise, and an inspiration to me, and I have never forgotten her fervent oft-repeated words, "I do believe in God."

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A. S. F.